

Policy Rent

Policy Statement

We will ensure rent is affordable for all renters allocated to Beyond Housing properties.

Policy Application

This policy applies to all Beyond Housing employees and includes all permanent and casual staff, volunteers, work experience students, management, and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). For the purposes of this document, all parties will be referred to throughout this policy as workplace participants.

This policy applies to all long-term housing owned by Beyond Housing.

Responsibility & Authority

- The Board of Beyond Housing has responsibility for ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements at a Governance level.
- This policy is operational and therefore the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring:
 - Appropriate and effective policies and systems are in place to operationalise legal and regulatory requirements and therefore implement this policy in accordance with that responsibility.
 - All managers and workplace participants are aware of this policy.
 - Support for workplace participants to undertake their responsibilities under this policy is provided.
- The CEO may delegate specific responsibility to managers or workplace participants to ensure that the objectives relating to this policy are met.
- Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for informing workplace participants about their responsibilities under this policy.
- All workplace participants are responsible to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its requirements.

Policy Detail

The purpose of this policy is to outline:

- Calculating rent – long term housing properties
- Providing information about household income
- Rent and income reviews
- Response to changes in household circumstances
- Managing rent arrears
- Renter hardship

Beyond Housing will:

- Set rent within established affordability benchmark.
- Communicate clearly to applicants and renters as to how we set and review rent.
- Respond to changes in household circumstances.
- Set rent to comply with contractual, legal, and regulatory obligations.

Calculating Rent

Beyond Housing applies different approaches to calculating rent that is determined by the type of long-term housing applied for. These are as follows:

Housing Type	Rent Subsidy Rate
Social Housing / Victorian Housing Register applicants	25% of total household income plus Maximum Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)
Affordable Housing	30% of total household income plus Maximum Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) If 30% of the total household income exceeds 75% of the market rent, the rent is capped at 75% of the market rent payable.

Please note:

Total household income is determined by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Social Housing Income and Asset limits.

Click here for a copy: [Social Housing Income and Asset Limits](#).

Total household income includes income from all sources; gross wages and salaries, income from investments, Centrelink payments, child support payments, overseas pensions, and Workcover/TAC/other compensation payments.

Providing information about household income

Renters and applicants are required to provide Beyond Housing with evidence of total household income before being offered a residential rental agreement, with Beyond Housing or at an annual rent review.

Rent and income reviews

- Rent and income reviews will be completed annually.
- Renters will be notified that their current total household income must be provided within 2 weeks.
- Renters will be provided with a 60-day notice of any increase in rent charges as per the RTA 1997.
- Renters will be provided with a clear explanation as to how their rent has been calculated.
- Beyond Housing may increase a renter's rent to maximum market rent if the renter does not provide certain information within the timeframe required.
- If a renter subsequently provides information about household income after a rent subsidy review, changes will only take effect on and from the date the renter provided the household income.

Market rent

Beyond Housing will set market rent to match the rent payable for an equivalent property in a similar location in the private rental market) that will be determined by an independent open market rent valuation or property professional.

Response to changes in household circumstances

- Renters are encouraged to contact their Property Manager if their household circumstances change, or they are facing hardship.
- Beyond Housing determines hardship by looking at the individual circumstances of the household.
- All responses to changes in household circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Renters will be offered a Tenancy Plus referral – a program that provides support to assist renters to keep their current property when they are at risk of losing their rental agreement.
- Rent reassessment will be determined in line with changes to household income if necessary.
- If rent at a particular property becomes unaffordable due to change in household circumstances, Beyond Housing will endeavour to assist the renters to find a more affordable option.
Refer to Rental Management Policy – response to changes in household circumstances.

Managing rent arrears

Beyond Housing will:

- Actively encourage renters who are having financial difficulties to contact their Property Manager if they are having difficulty paying their rent.
- Focus on contacting the renter when the first payment is missed, rather than waiting for rent arrears to accrue.
- Keep the renters support agency/worker up to date, if relevant.
- Provide referral options to the renter regarding advocacy services and local support agencies.
- If the arrears reach 14 days, a 14-day Notice to Vacate will be issued according to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) (the RTA)*.
- At every opportunity, renters will be provided with the option to sign a debt repayment agreement, to ensure any arrears that have been accrued can be repaid at a reasonable rate.

Human rights considerations

In making decisions, Beyond Housing must give proper consideration to the relevant human rights in accordance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 s38(1) (the charter)*.

This consideration should include the potential impact the proposed action we are undertaking may have on the renters and their household member's rights under the Charter.

Definitions

Renter	The person to whom premises are let under a residential rental agreement. Previously referred to as a tenant.
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Related

Document Reference	Document Type
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)	Legislation
Housing Act 1983 (Vic)	Legislation
Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)	Legislation
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)	Legislation
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)	Legislation
Feedback – Compliments & Complaints	Policy
Eligibility & Allocation	Policy
Maintenance & Repairs	Policy
Privacy & Confidentiality	Policy
Rights & Responsibility	Policy
Sustaining Tenancies	Policy
Homelessness Services Guidelines & Conditions of Funding May 2014	Other

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